



SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

"Hunting provides the principal incentive and revenue for conservation.
Hence it is a force for conservation."

World Conservation Force Bulletin

www.conservationforce.org April 2015

It's Simple: Hunting is Conservation

There is an inherent, interdependent relationship between hunting and conservation. The two are complementary parts of the same thing. Today, many game species would no longer exist without conservation intervention, and continued conservation is necessary to preserve hunting opportunities for these species. The protection of habitat and production of game are necessary to hunting, are they not? Well then, so is conservation.

Just as conservation is necessary for hunting in today's world, hunting is necessary for conservation. Hunting is a driving force behind conservation. Hunters pay for the greater share of wildlife management, law enforcement (anti-poaching), research and habitat preservation. What hunters don't pay in direct fees they pay in income, sales and use taxes imposed on the hunting community.

It is often expressed that "hunting is conservation." Indeed, hunting has been institutionalized to perpetuate the resources upon which it depends for the good of all. Hunting was long ago programmed to be a primary tool of American conservation by Aldo Leopold, the "Father of Conservation" and modern environmentalism. There is no army in the world equal to the number of licensed, regulated hunters in North America. It is the foundation of modern conservation. They have been institutionally put to work for the resource.

Some in society today do not know of or understand this interrelationship, as true and basic as it is. They also do not understand the inherent relationship between use and stewardship. There may be no better term for expressing stewardship and husbandry than the revered biblical term "shepherd." Jesus,



John J. Jackson III

Moses, Abraham and all the prophets were shepherds. Shepherds have been immortalized in art and sculpture. As recognized as the protective term shepherd is, shepherds eat sheep, don't they? Shepherds are the ultimate caretakers and protectors of domestic sheep and sheep habitat. They have been from the beginning of

time. Understood or not, hunters are the shepherds of wildlife and its habitat.

That conservation is dependent on hunting may seem counterintuitive, but it is not counterintuitive when viewed from the perspective of institutionalized wildlife management science and practices. We need this management to protect wildlife from outside forces, and hunting creates the impetus for management. Law enforcement, including anti-poaching, is a part of management and a force for conservation. Not surprisingly, poaching control is an essential component of hunting with hunters serving as the first line of defense.

Readers know that the name *Conservation Force* functionally stands for the fact that **sportsmen are the force**

behind conservation. Our signature projects demonstrate and validate the role of hunting as a conservation tool. Those projects range from our Land Trust Division that holds conservation easements to projects strategically designed to use hunting to save threatened and endangered species worldwide, from Pakistan to Namibia. It includes more than one quarter of a million dollars a year in poaching control. The reality of hunting as a force for conservation continues to be recognized and validated by CITES, IUCN, USFWS et al. It works when too little else succeeds. Whether or not the uninitiated understand the North American Wildlife Conservation Model, the "user pay" concept is simple. The generation of operating budget revenue is necessary. Genuine stakeholders are necessary. The users do pay. Hunters are shepherds of wildlife who do care. They are trustworthy stakeholders, protectors, and gamekeepers.

At the conventions this year, the "conservation" nature of modern hunting was repeatedly broadcasted. The hunting community has rightfully taken the term back. For a fact, all modern hunting organizations cite "conservation" as their primary mission. We can't find one that does not. The 40+ leading hunting-based wildlife conservation organizations that constitute the *American Wildlife Conservation Partners* (AWCP) are a



forum of hunter-funded conservation organizations with millions of members that provide hundreds of millions of dollars a year toward conservation. Witness Ducks Unlimited, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Wild Turkey Federation, et al. It is too little known that the NRA's Hunter's Division provides a million dollars a month in direct conservation funding or that others, like Ducks Unlimited, provide 20 million dollars a month. In the last year we have documented hunting operators in Tanzania and Zimbabwe who each fund three quarters to one million dollars a year to anti-poaching and community conservation incentives. This is overshadowed by the billions of dollars in license fees and excise taxes in the United States and tens of millions of dollars in concession and permit fees paid directly to the management authorities in Africa. It is real and it is necessary. It is conservation. It is funded by hunters.

The Wild Sheep Foundation convention was the first of the stellar conventions held this year. On Thursday before the "Conservation Auction" during the "Conservation Night," Gray Thornton, President-CEO, aptly said: "Conservation is what we do. Conservation is what we are." No one can deny that the purpose of the WSF, its reason for being, is **To Put and Keep Sheep on the Mountain.** Everything the WSF does is the epitome of conservation, including the several million dollars and more raised at its annual convention that directly funds state wildlife department wild sheep programs. Its vision is "to be the best managed, most respected and most influential conservation organization in the world, for the benefit of all stakeholders and wild sheep worldwide."

No one would deny that Ducks Unlimited (DU) is one of the premier conservation organizations ever to have existed. It is the "foremost leader in wetlands conservation," having "conserved more than 13.4 million acres (of wetlands) across North America since the organization's inception." It presently has a page-size advertisement that states, "Hunter: another word for conservationist." Emphasis added. That is followed with an explanation:

Hunters do more to conserve habitat

than any other group. And they have achieved great things for wildlife and wild places by supporting conservation organizations like Ducks Unlimited. Because of their support, Ducks Unlimited has conserved more than 13 million acres of habitat across the continent. Come share our vision of skies filled with waterfowl today, tomorrow and forever.

Houston Safari Club has always had the motto that "Hunting is Conservation" and, of course, conservation is its mission and what it proudly practices.

At the GSCO Convention in Reno, the fact that *Hunting is the #1 Conservation Tool* was broadcast in the *Slam Quest Magazine*, in the board and floor speeches before the general membership, and was the entry banner of the convention. Dennis Campbell, President, also cited the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation's slogan that "Hunting is Conservation." He cited a RMEF webpage entitled "25 Reasons Why Hunting is Conservation." He also cited a recent issue of the Boone & Crockett Club publication with the mantra "Where Hunting Happens, Conservation Happens."

The conservation services to society that hunters provide should not be confused with why we hunt in human terms. We hunt for many personal, rewarding reasons that have to be the subject of another article. Except in the case of hunting for basic subsistence, we hunt to have hunted.

A great deal of conservation, on the other hand, is done out of necessity. Conservation is also certainly rewarding for itself, as so many hunters know. While hunting is important to the human spirit and happiness, so is contributing to wildlife and habitat. This reward and fulfillment from giving back and growing the natural world is another, third dimension of hunters' intense connection to the resource. Being a



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conservationist has its own rewards, but when added to the first-hand experience hunters have with nature it is that much sweeter.

A fourth consideration is the public acceptance and image of hunters. The general non-hunting public will never be made to understand what hunting means to hunters or the intensity of the hunter's heightened relationship with animals and nature. Nevertheless, most non-hunters should take into account the indispensable contributions of hunters. It is disingenuous and contradictory, if not counterintuitive, not to care about all

that hunters contribute.

Shane Mahoney is a valuable member of Conservation Force's Board of Directors. He is a part of our "think thank" that offers leadership, direction and analysis to the hunting community. His own organization is *Conservation Visions*. His signature issues/slogans include "Why conservation matters," "Wildlife does not exist by accident," and "The relevance of hunting." There is no space here to do more than mention that Shane is contributing to a new awareness of the growing need for both hunter-based conservation and an even broader

conservation constituency. This does not change the reality that for ages hunters have contributed more as a group and per capita in conservation (game and non-game alike) than others.

Hunters need conservation, hunters provide conservation, and hunters are naturally positioned to revel in conservation participation. There is sound reason for hunters to be proud. Conservation Force invites your participation in partnership with it to be a greater force for the good of all. It can sweeten and enhance you and your children's lives. ■

Conservation Force's Pre-Application to be an Accredited Land Trust is Accepted

Among other things, Conservation Force is a land trust. The establishment, holding and maintenance of conservation easements is one of our primary objectives. In short, as a public charity, we accept the donation of conservation easements on private land to ensure the property remains in or is restored to an undeveloped state forever. As the holder of the development rights, we periodically inspect the property to ensure the agreements have not been breached. We hold easements from Texas to South Carolina and are the largest easement holder in the State of Louisiana. Now, we are stepping up our program by registering to become an "accredited land trust," a program of the Land Trust Alliance, a national conservation organization representing more than 1,700 land trusts across the United States. We have just successfully completed the pre-application process.

The land trust accreditation

program recognizes land conservation organizations that meet national quality standards for protecting important natural places and working lands forever. Conservation Force has registered and applied for accreditation with the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. The pre-application (second stage) was accepted in January and we are in the final step of accreditation.

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, conducts an extensive review of each applicant's policies and programs. Conservation Force has always stewarded its habitat conservation projects with the highest integrity and standards, and being awarded accreditation will confirm and support our continued excellence. We are constantly striving to improve, and accreditation will aid us in this mission. Moreover, it will help us know and apply the highest standards.

The Commission invites public input and accepts signed, written comments on pending applications. A public comment period for Conservation Force's application is now open. Comments must relate to how Conservation Force complies with national quality standards. These standards address the ethical and technical operation of a land trust. For the full list of standards see <http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org/tips-and-tools/indicator-practices>.

To learn more about the accreditation program or to submit a comment, visit www.landtrustaccreditation.org, or email your comment to info@landtrustaccreditation.org. Comments may also be faxed or mailed to the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, Attn: Public Comments: (fax) 518-587-3183; (mail) 36 Phila Street, Suite 2, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866. Comments on Conservation Force's application will be most useful by May 24, 2015. ■

Zimbabwe Conservation Task Force Shows its True Colors

In early January the *Zimbabwe Conservation Task Force* (ZCTF) of Harare, Zimbabwe filed a motion to intervene in SCI and NRA's elephant lawsuit challenging the FWS suspension of elephant trophy imports, Case No. 1:14-cv-00670 (RCL), United States District Court for the District of Columbia. The like-minded Friends of Animals filed with ZCTF to keep elephant imports suspended.

The motion is supported by sworn declarations of both Priscilla Feral

of Friends of Animals and Johnny Rodrigues, founder and chairman of the board of ZCTF. The two individuals represent that they themselves and their organizations are opposed to the hunting of elephant and opposed to the importing of elephant hunting trophies from Zimbabwe.

Johnny Rodrigues "is upset that elephants are hunted for sport" at all. In a sworn declaration he states that he and his family are all members of Friends of Animals and that he "support(s) its

mission and goals..."

Readers should be aware that after the suspension of elephant trophy imports from Zimbabwe last year Conservation Force sent a number of Freedom of Information Act requests (FOIAs) to FWS to get all negative information FWS relied upon for its negative enhancement finding. The information produced was largely hyperbolic news articles published by Zimbabwe Conservation Task Force. One such example was the claim that

300 or more elephant were poisoned in Hwange National Park when only approximately 100 were killed. The articles are most conspicuous for what they do not state. They do not detail all the arrests and convictions and remedial measures that had been responsibly taken by Zim Parks and the part played by exemplary hunting operators.

Our assessment has been and continues to be that Johnny Rodrigues is against elephant hunting and more. Now, his intervention, membership and association with Friends of Animals speaks for itself. He wants the suspension to continue.

“[U]nder penalty of perjury,” Johnny Rodrigues states that “ZCTF has also worked to prevent the trade of live elephants, as well as prevent the trade of animals that have been killed and their parts.” He opines under oath that “sport hunting, along with the lack of law and order, discourages tourism that could otherwise assist wildlife conservation...(and) the most important thing to do...is to try and persuade national parks to stop doing things that upset the tourists...and poaching and sport hunting seriously threaten the continued survival of wildlife, such as African elephants.

“I believe that sport-hunting of African elephants must be stopped. While United States hunters and organizations claim that money from sports hunting goes towards conservation, the people living here and working to conserve the animals have not seen any evidence to support that claim. Rather, the safari operators are the only benefactors of sport hunting, and the poor and rural people of Zimbabwe receive no benefits from it. The only way to stop poaching is to stop hunting as well. I am very happy with the current U.S. suspension on the import of elephant trophies, as it helps conserve the elephants and protect my interest in them. ■

New Corporate-Conservation Sponsor: Ripcord Travel Protection Program

We have been very careful in our selection of corporate sponsors. Our new sponsor Ripcord Travel Protection is no exception. Its comprehensive program and services to the hunting and adventure travel community are a “game changer.” Its program is the most comprehensive one-stop shop for the traveling sportsman. You make the selection of the parts you want, but the services can include:

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for the adventure travel community is too extensive to detail here. For more information or to sign up, go through the special Conservation Force portal at www.ripcordtravelprotection.com/consforce. That is Conservation Force’s unique link. Please use it.

So what is a “Corporate-Conservation Sponsor”? It is a Sponsor that wants to participate in select conservation and public service projects with Conservation Force above and beyond the Corporate Sponsorship fee. We will keep you advised as Ripcord helps us find conservation solutions in addition to trip travel solutions. ■

Congressional Action to Exempt Three Amigos from Permitting Upheld by Federal Court

On March 4, 2015, the United States District Court for the District of Columbia dismissed the Friends of Animals (FoA) suit challenging Title I, Section 127 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014 that Congress passed to exempt the Three Amigos (addax, scimitar-horned oryx and Dama gazelle) from ranch-by-ranch permitting. The FoA asked that the USFWS regulation reinstatement in furtherance of the Congressional

Act be declared unconstitutional and, alternatively, asked for recognition that the FWS regulation violates the ESA and the APA. On most issues the Court ruled that FoA did not have standing, as it has in the past. On the sole issue where it did have standing to sue—the claim that the FWS exemption violated Section 10(f) of the ESA that requires public notice and commenting of ESA listed species before permits can be issued—the Court held: “The FWS’s actions in promulgating the

(exemption) rule were compelled by the statute, consistent with Congressional intent...” therefore were not in violation of any of the laws claimed to be violated (APA and ESA).

This was exactly as expected. The FWS only did what Congress directed FWS to do and that specific Congressional directive overrides preexisting and less exact provisions of general law. This, no doubt, is why only FoA has been pursuing the litigation. ■

Conservation Force Sponsor

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